



U.S. Department of Justice

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **District Man Sentenced to 25 Years in Prison For Fatal Shooting -Defendant Tried to Back Out of Guilty Plea-**

WASHINGTON – Alonzo Vaughn, also known as “Zo,” or “Lonzo,” 25, of Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to 25 years in prison on charges stemming from the October 2007 fatal shooting of a Southeast Washington man, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

The sentencing followed months of legal proceedings over Vaughn’s attempts to withdraw a guilty plea in the killing of 20-year-old William Bates.

In March 2010, as his trial was beginning in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia before the Honorable Lynn Leibovitz, Vaughn pled guilty to a charge of second degree murder while armed. Under his agreement with the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Vaughn was subject to a sentencing range of between 20 and 25 years in prison for the murder.

However, shortly after entering his guilty plea, Vaughn moved to withdraw it, claiming that he acted in self-defense. In April 2011, following extensive evidentiary hearings, Judge Leibovitz denied Vaughn’s motion to withdraw his guilty plea.

At sentencing today, Judge Leibovitz also ordered that Vaughn be placed on five years of supervised release once he completes the 25-year prison term.

According to the facts elicited at Vaughn’s guilty plea, at the evidentiary hearing, and as set forth in a sentencing memorandum of the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the murder was the culmination of a series of altercations between Vaughn’s girlfriend and other women at the Congress Park Apartment complex. Neither Vaughn nor his girlfriend resided in the Congress Park Apartments.

At times, conflicts with one woman ended with Vaughn’s girlfriend threatening that Vaughn would respond and assault that woman’s boyfriend. On several occasions, Vaughn did subsequently appear at the Congress Park Apartments, armed with a pistol or a sawed-off shotgun, and threatened one or more individuals. On August 13, 2007, Vaughn was arrested behind the Congress Park Apartments with a sawed-off shotgun.

On the evening of October 5, 2007, Vaughn's girlfriend initiated a physical confrontation with the pregnant girlfriend of William Bates. Bates himself broke up the confrontation. Vaughn's girlfriend threatened Bates that Vaughn would "smoke" someone that night.

At about 2 a.m. on October 6, 2007, Vaughn appeared at the Congress Park Apartments, in the 1300 block of Congress Street SE, armed with a concealed revolver.

A social gathering was under way in the courtyard of the complex. Vaughn spotted Bates, who was seated on a low concrete stoop in the courtyard. Vaughn walked over to where Bates was seated and stood about six feet away for approximately five minutes -- during which time no words or gestures passed between them. But when Bates stood up and began walking away from where Vaughn was standing, Vaughn rushed up behind Bates, pulled out his revolver, and shot Bates once behind his left ear, killing him.

Vaughn has given various accounts of what happened. On the morning of the murder, he gave a videotaped statement to police in which he claimed that he was not even at the scene. At his guilty plea, he swore under oath that he killed Bates and that there was no basis for a self-defense claim. Still later, he claimed that he acted in self-defense.

Judge Leibovitz sentenced Vaughn to the maximum possible sentence under his plea agreement with the U.S. Attorney's Office and ordered that this sentence would run consecutive to a 4 ½ year sentence that he now is serving in another case.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen expressed appreciation to the Metropolitan Police Department. He particularly praised the work of Criminal Investigation Division, Homicide Branch Detectives Anthony Greene and Joshua Branson, Cold Case/Major Case Detective Jeffrey Owens, and retired Mobile Crime Technician John Holsworth. In addition, U.S. Attorney Machen commended the work of Marcia Rinker of the Victim Witness Assistance Unit. Finally, he praised the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Vivien Cockburn, who investigated and indicted the case, and of Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce R. Hegyi who, together with Assistant U.S. Attorney Cockburn, began the trial of this matter in 2010 and handled the subsequent post-plea proceedings.